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IMAGES



IN TIME

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CANADIAN NATIONAL



IMAGES IN TIME

A Basic Guide to the
Processing and Preservation of
Historical Photographs

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Provincial Archives of Alberta

Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip leave the CN Station in Edmonton after being greeted by Lieutenant-Governor Bowlen and other officials on 27 October 1951, during the 1951 Royal Visit. Garneau Studio Collection, Gs.926/4.



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All photographs courtesy of The Provincial
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Cover photograph: Tom Spinks' barber shop,
Bowden, Alberta, 1912. Hoare Collection,
H.769.

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Preface

The main purpose of this book is to assist those with historical photographs in their possession to learn more about preserving them properly and making them available to members of the public. It also offers essential information on how to organize these materials.

However, this publication is not an exhaustive examination of all aspects of the care of historical photographs. Those wishing to learn more about particular aspects of such curatorship should consult the bibliography at the end of the book.

Left: British Columbia lumberjacks "spring-boarding" in order to fell a large tree, c. 1910. Pollard Collection, P.1026.

Right: Farmer's daughter and team near Strathmore, Alberta, n.d. Pollard Collection, P.537.





Introduction

What is the fascination of old photographs? Why do people enjoy browsing through a family album or a box of old snapshots? Who has not stopped to look in a photographer's display window? A single image can provide a tantalizing glimpse of the places, people, and events that characterize a time in history. For example, a diary or letter describing what it was like to homestead with no neighbors for miles around is invaluable, but it is brought alive by a photograph of a solitary sod hut. Not only can photos be used to illustrate written works, they also stand on their own. Displays and books consisting almost entirely of photographs are immensely popular.

Left: Mr. & Mrs. J.A. McPherson of Stony Plain, Alberta, 1898. Brown Collection, B.8303.

Homesteading family in front of their home in Southern Alberta, 1918. Pollard Collection, P.592.



The invention of photography added a new dimension to our ability to record visual information. Before 1839, when Louis Daguerre produced the first photographic image, the visual record of human experiences was made by means of sketches and paintings. Now, visual details and information could be “captured in time” in easily portable form.

Despite the revolutionary nature of Daguerre’s invention, his process was rather cumbersome and produced only a single image and no negative. Other photographers experimented with different processes, which produced the photographic images known as the ambrotype and the tintype. Like the daguerreotype, these processes produced only one image and no negative. It was not until the 1850s that technology advanced to the point where it was possible to produce the wet collodion glass negative, from which multiple prints could be made. The final advance in technology was the invention of the dry-plate glass negative in the 1880s.¹

Right: W. Hanson Boorne, E.G. May, and C.W. Mathers, three of Alberta’s pioneer photographers, 1892. Brown Collection, B.993.

Garneau Studio, Edmonton, September 1951. Garneau Studio Collection, Gs.914/2.

¹ The first professional photographer to establish himself in what is now Alberta was C.W. Mathers, who arrived in Calgary in the late 1880s. Since the province was little settled at that time, it is highly unlikely that photo collections in Alberta contain numerous examples of the early photographic processes, so they are not discussed in any detail here. However, for those who have daguerreotypes or tintypes in their collections, more information on their nature and care is available in the bibliography.





B 993

(829.)

Acquiring Historical Photographs

Before individuals or institutions even begin to look for photographs to acquire, they should know what it is that they want to collect. Institutions should have a clear-cut acquisitions policy approved by the trustees or executive board. For example, a policy may limit collecting to photo materials relating to a particular locality or geographical region, or a particular subject area or theme. In addition, with today's proliferation of local museums, archives, and historical societies, it is important to be aware of other mandates already established. This will avoid unnecessary competition and duplication in collecting jurisdictions. If items are encountered that do not meet policy requirements, it is only common courtesy to refer these items to an appropriate institution or individual. Such a gesture will pay off in terms of the goodwill generated, and the favor may be returned some day.

Once a definite acquisitions policy has been established, the search for historical photographs can begin. In some cases, the search could be easy since people in the community may well come forward with photographs once they learn that someone is interested in them. However, no curator of historical photographs will be content with such a passive approach.

Far right: Edmonton's Metropolitan Church being torn down, October 1942. Blyth Collection, Bl.423/1.

Reflection of Chateau Lake Louise and photographer Alfred Blyth, c. 1924. Blyth Collection, Bl.276/8.





There are a number of ways in which to locate caches of photographs.

- A fairly obvious method is to contact individuals and families. The general availability of cameras and the popularity of photography has meant that most people have albums or boxes of snapshots.
- Another way is to approach the local newspaper to see if negatives and/or prints of shots used in past issues have been kept.
- A local photographic studio may have boxes of obsolete negatives in its basement or storage area and may be delighted to get rid of them.
- Check on any old buildings that are to be demolished. Basements and attics can yield a treasure-trove of glass plates.
- Old photographs may also turn up at auction sales or in antique shops.

Once aware of the existence of historical photographs, what factors does one take into account in deciding whether or not to acquire them? The first thing is to get in touch with the owner and arrange to examine the items. A visual examination, plus discussion with the owner, will provide answers to the following important questions:

- Of what does the collection consist — prints? negatives? glass plates? safety film? nitrate film?
- How large is the collection?
- What is the format (size) of the items in the collection?
- Under what terms can the collection be acquired — donation? copy-loan? purchase?

A photo archivist sorts through a large collection received from a private donor.



- What is the technical quality of the images? Are they out of focus? of insufficient density? otherwise poor-quality images?
- What is the physical condition of images in the collection — stained? dirty? cracked? broken? What resources and expertise will be required to perform the necessary repairs?
- What storage space and staff will be needed to preserve and index the collection properly?
- Are the images properly identified as to dates, subjects, places, and events? If not, is someone available to assist in the satisfactory identification of the images? (An unidentified photograph is the bane of an archivist's existence!)
- Is the ownership of the collection clearly established? Does the person disposing of the collection have the right to do so?
- Can copyright to the collection be obtained?

Winnipeg City Hall, 1885. Brown Collection, B.2313.





Group of Royal North West Mounted Police, n.d. Brown Collection, B.1852.

Copyright is a complicated matter. In the case of photographs, the Copyright Act currently states that copyright belongs to the person who owned the original negative at the time it was made, and remains with that person for 50 years from that date. Thus, a photograph made within the last half century cannot be published or otherwise reproduced without the permission of the copyright holder. A photograph older than 50 years, however, is in the public domain; it can be reproduced without seeking permission from the original owner. Therefore, when acquiring a collection, it is vital to clarify the copyright situation. Whenever possible, acquire copyright as well as ownership in order to avoid the time and trouble involved in obtaining permission from the copyright owner every time someone wants to reproduce a print. If there are any difficulties in sorting out the matter, seek legal advice.

Once the collection has been examined, and the above questions answered satisfactorily, steps can be taken to acquire the collection.

The most common method (and the most desirable from the point of view of an institution) is by outright donation or gift. In this instance, it is customary to have the donor sign some sort of "certificate of gift" form so as to have a record of the transaction and avoid future misunderstandings. A simple certificate of gift form is shown opposite.

CERTIFICATE OF GIFT

Accession No. _____

Date _____

Name of
Institution _____

Address _____

In the interests of the preservation of the heritage of this area,
I unconditionally donate the following items:

It is my wish that these items and all rights thereto should become the
property of (Name of Institution) for preservation and in accordance with
the (Name of Institution)'s policies and procedures.

Signature of Donor _____

Name of Donor _____

Address _____



The owner, of course, may prefer to retain possession of the photographs, but be agreeable to lending them for copying. The institution then retains copy negatives and returns the originals. However, since copy-loan raises certain problems connected with copyright, it is essential that, *before* the copy-loan arrangement is concluded, both parties come to a clear understanding as to who has further reproduction rights. And, of course, there should be a written agreement that itemizes the terms of the arrangement.

An alternative to present to someone who wishes to retain ownership is the possibility of bequeathing the photographs to the institution in a will.

If the owner is unwilling to donate the collection and the institution is fortunate enough to have an acquisitions budget, then there is the possibility that the photographs can be purchased. Again, there should be a written record of the transaction.

Another means of acquisition involves an independent appraisal of fair market value, which the donor can use as a tax credit. Since this procedure is somewhat complicated and not all institutions are qualified to issue receipts for tax credit, references to literature providing more information on this matter can be found in the bibliography.

Left: Miss W. Brower dressed as a cowgirl, n.d. Brown Collection, B.137.

Right: St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, Stony Plain, Alberta, 1899. Brown Collection, B.2515.



Processing

Once acquired, photographs have to be processed. For the purposes of this book, processing has been divided into two main parts: Descriptive Processing, which includes arrangement, numbering, and indexing; and Technical Processing, which includes storage, preservation, and conservation. It is important to understand that neither of these aspects of the care of photographs takes place in isolation, and very often a curator will move from one to the other and back again. The two are described separately here only for ease of explanation.

It is also important to remember that both aspects of processing require the handling of photographs, whether negatives or prints. Careless handling is a significant factor in damage to photographic materials. To minimize damage, *white gloves must be worn whenever these materials are being processed.*

Right: Two actors in Indian costume for an Edmonton amateur theatrical production, n.d. Brown Collection, B.9114.

Grand Trunk Pacific section men at the railway station in Stony Plain, Alberta, 1892. Brown Collection, B.5027.







Descriptive Processing

Once the collection has been acquired, it must be accessioned. This procedure is essential whenever any archival material is being added to an institution's holdings and should be done as soon as possible after the material arrives.

All materials should be itemized in an Accession Register, according to standard format. The Accession Register records the following information:

- an identifying accession number. This usually consists of the last two digits of the year in which the item was acquired, plus a number signifying the order in which the collection was received. For example, the first accession in 1982 would be '82.1, the second accession 82.2, and so on. Although other accession number systems certainly can be devised, this one is in common use. It has the further advantage of indicating the year an item was acquired and thus is not likely to be confused with other identification or retrieval numbers.
- the name and address of the person from whom the material was acquired
- the date the material was acquired
- the nature of the accession (gift, copy-loan, or purchase)
- the extent of the material, including the number of items (e.g., 26 photographs) and/or, in the case of large collections, the linear shelf space occupied by the collection
- a description of the material, including dates of the items, their physical nature (e.g., negatives or prints), and general subject coverage
- the name or initials of the staff member receiving the items
- whether the collection has been acknowledged
- whether the collection has been fully described and indexed on an accession control record.

A sample page from an Accession Register is illustrated on page 24.

If a collection is particularly large, it may not be possible to fill in all these details immediately. However, at the very least, a number can be assigned and the basic information recorded.

The Accession Register records only basic information, and it is customary to have a more detailed Accession Control Record, which describes the items or the collection more fully and may include retrieval information. Each institution can, of course, design a form to suit its own

NAME OF INSTITUTION

ACCESSION REGISTER

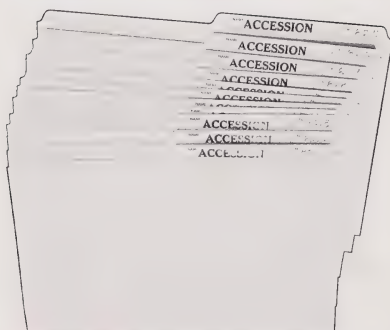
Accession Number	Name and Address	Date Rec'd	Nature of Acc.	No. of Items or Extent	Description	Rec'd by	Receipt Acknowledged	Acc. Control Record
82.23	Ms. Jane Smith 12 Maple Cresc. EDMONTON, Alta.	20 Jan. 1982	Gift	10 prints	3 prints of Inauguration Ceremonies in Edmonton, 1 Sept 1905; 5 prints of various views of Jasper Avenue, 1904-1910; 2 prints of Calgary Stampede, 1919	J.T.	22 Jan. 1982	22 Jan. 1982
82.56	Jones Studios 5611 Railway St. RED DEER, Alta.	3 Mar. 1982	Purchase	c. 350 negatives	Shots of prominent people, places, & events relating to the history of Red Deer & area, c. 1910-1932.	M.M.	4 Mar. 1982	4 Mar. 1982

NAME OF INSTITUTION - SOURCE CARD

Source: Name: _____

Address: _____

Accession Number(s) _____ Nature of Accession _____



needs, but a sample of the sorts of information to be included is shown on page 25. (Since most institutions hold more than just photographs, both the Accession Register and the Accession Control Record have been designed with other types of holdings in mind.)

Another step in the accession procedure is the preparation of a formal acknowledgement to inform the donor that the collection has been received in good order and to let him or her know the accession number. Once this is done, it should be noted in the Accession Register.

At this time, it is a good idea to prepare a source card listing the source of the collection (the name and address of the donor/vendor/lender), as well as the accession number. These cards should be filed alphabetically so that there is a record of all accessions from the same source.

It is most important to keep complete records of how collections are acquired and handled. For this reason, a system of accession files should be established. Each file should contain such items as: the certificate of gift or sale form; the Accession Control Record form; the acknowledgement letter to the donor; any correspondence involved in the acquisition; and the details of any restrictions there might be.

Accession files are labelled on the outside and arranged in order of accession number.

NAME OF INSTITUTION
Accession Control Record

Source: Name: Ms. Jane SMITH Accession Number 82.23

Address: 12 Maple Crescent,
EDMONTON, Alta.

Date Received: 20 Jan. 1982 Date Acknowledged: 22 Jan. 1982

Nature of Accession: Gift Source Card: done 22 Jan. 1982

Description: 3 prints of Inauguration Ceremonies in Edmonton,
1 Sept. 1905; 5 prints of various views of Jasper
Avenue, 1904-1910; 2 prints of Calgary Stampede, 1919.

Outside Dates: 1904-1919

Physical Form: B&W Negative: _____ Nitrate Film: _____ Safety Film: _____

B&W Prints: ✓

Color: Slides/Transparencies: _____ Negatives: _____ Prints: _____

Extent: _____ cm. _____ m. of shelf space

_____ negatives 10 prints _____ slides/transparencies _____

Condition: Slightly faded, dusty, mounted on card stock

Conservation Requirements: Need to be removed from mounts & cleaned

Descriptive Processing: Selection: ✓ Sort: ✓ Numbering: ✓

Re-enveloping: ✓ Indexing: ✓ (Use additional sheets
for detailed indexing)

Technical Processing: Duplicate Negatives: _____ Copy Negatives: done 1 Feb. 1982

Reference Prints: done 4 Feb. 1982

ACR Completed by: J.T. Date completed: 22 Jan. 1982

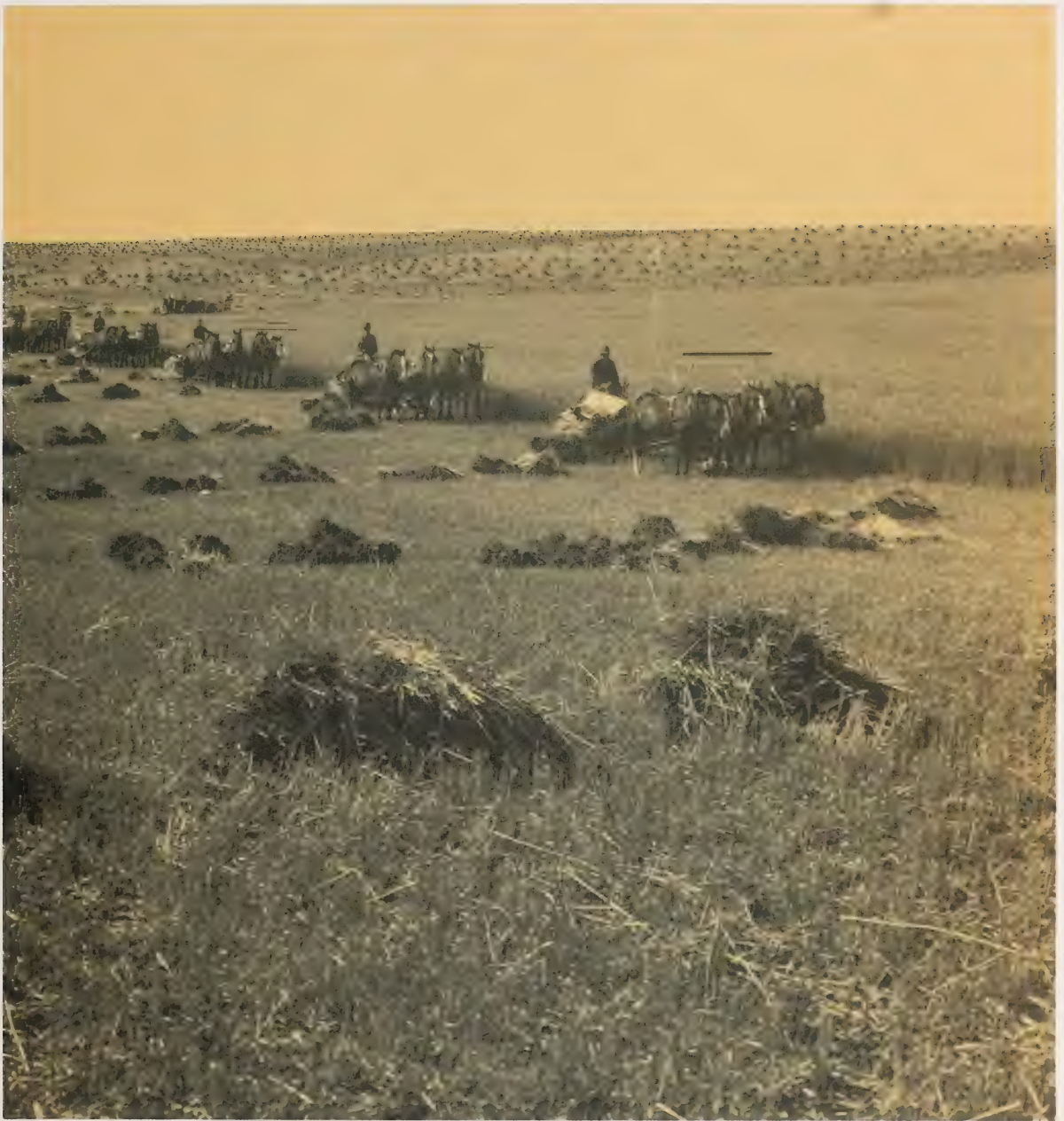
Selecting and Sorting

The next step in processing photographs is that of selection and sorting.

If the collection is very small, it should be possible to select the items for permanent preservation at the time of acquisition. However, larger collections will likely contain some images of such poor quality that they would not be retained. Examples are glass negatives so badly cracked that they are beyond repair, pictures that have no relevance to the collecting mandate of the institution, images that are out of focus, and images that cannot possibly be identified. Such items should be weeded out of the collection and transferred to another repository, discarded, or returned to the donor, whichever seems appropriate according to the terms of the original acquisition.

Main street of Lethbridge, [1920]. Polard Collection, P.4006.





Horsedrawn binders on the Schultz farm at Rockyford, Alberta, c. 1920. Pollard Collection, P.608.

While selecting and sorting images, think ahead in order to make numbering and indexing easier. If there is no apparent order to the collection, sorting like images together will make the collection easier to use. For example, if a collection contains ten photographs of a town's main street, three of the first mayor and his family, and six of harvesting, it makes sense to sort these so that the three main subject areas are together. If, however, there is a readily apparent order to the collection, try to maintain that order. For example, if the collection of a professional photographer is already numbered and his/her daybooks are available to serve as indexes, resist the temptation to disturb the original order.



Indexing

Once sorting and selection have taken place, start numbering and indexing the photographs so that researchers and curators can find particular images dealing with a specific subject, place, or event.

Each image must have its own separate number so that it cannot be confused with any other. There are many numbering systems which can be used, but the two methods presented here would work well for collections of up to several thousand images.

1. One method is to keep the accession number and add sub-numbers as required. For example, if Accession 82.23 contains ten photos, they could be numbered 82.23/1, 82.23/2, and so on up to 82.23/10. The advantage to this system is that the unity of the collection can be maintained, and this system can be used for non-photographic materials as well. The disadvantage is that the numbering is somewhat cumbersome; the longer the number, the more likelihood of errors any time the number has to be used.
2. An alternative is to assign numbers not related to the accession number in order to keep all the photographic items together in sequence. For example, if our ten photographs from Accession 82.23 were the first to come to the institution, they would be numbered P1, P2, P3, and so on up to P10. If Accession 82.24 also contained photographs, they would be numbered starting with P11, P12, and so on. The advantage of this system is that all the images are numbered in sequence and are kept together with no gaps. The disadvantage is that a system of cross-referencing is required to ensure that one can relate the numbers on the photographs back to the right accession and thus refer to information about the source of the collection and how it was obtained.

Neither system is without its disadvantages, so decide which will work best for your institution. If the collection grows beyond several thousand, or if it consists of large collections from professional photographers or newspapers, other alternatives may have to be explored. In this circumstance, it may help to consult a larger institution that has an extensive photograph collection.

Once a numbering system has been decided upon and numbers have been assigned to the images in a particular accession, the number of each image must be recorded on the back of the original print. While there is professional disagreement as to whether or not an institution's stamp

should appear on original material, the stamp does serve to identify the item as the property of that institution. The stamp and the number can be placed as unobtrusively as possible on the back of the original prints, perhaps in one corner, and pressed on very lightly. If working with negatives, the number of the image should be recorded on the outside of a negative storage envelope, and the negative stored in it until further processing can take place. To avoid confusion, the negative and the corresponding print for each image should have the same number.

Now that each image has a unique number, index cards should be prepared. It is all very well for most of the information about a photograph collection to be inside a curator's head, but what happens when that person departs from the scene? Thus, it is essential that there be a system of index cards that will enable staff and interested inquirers to gain access to photographs from a number of points of reference. In any case, if the curator is absent, anyone should be able to use the index and the collection without assistance.

The following information should be included on index cards:

- number
- subject(s)
- title (if any)
- date
- photographer
- remarks.

A suggested format is shown below.

No.
Subjects
Title
Date
Photographer
Remarks
2226-3

Rarely will a photograph have only one subject. For example, even a portrait of the first mayor of Edmonton should have two subject entries: the name of the mayor, "McCauley, Matt"; and the general subject, "Edmonton—Mayors". Subject selection is very important, and most photographs will need several subject entries. However, a judgment must be made about indexing and the detail required. Do not over-index. If something is barely visible in the background, it does not warrant an index entry. If you are averaging more than five subjects per image, you are probably over-indexing.

Far right: Examples of index cards and the corresponding photographs.



No. P156

Subjects Many Turning Robes
Indians - Blackfoot

Title

Date n.d.

Photographer Harry Pollard

Remarks

2226-3



No. B2678

Subjects Vegreville - Streets
Confederation - Diamond Jubilee
Parades

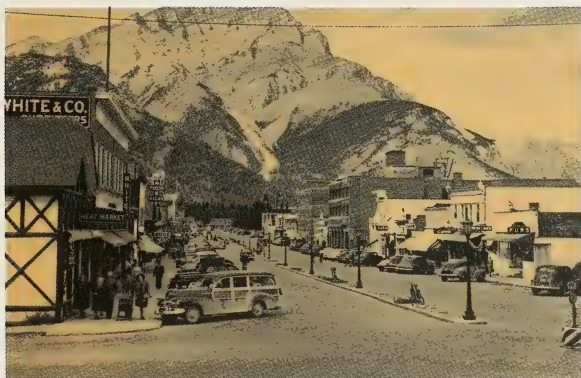
Title Diamond Jubilee of Confederation
Celebration at Vegreville

Date 1 July, 1927

Photographer Ernest Brown

Remarks

2226-3



No. PA 262/4

Subjects Banff - Streets - Banff Avenue

Title

Date September 1962

Photographer Public Affairs Bureau

Remarks

2226-3



No. B3704

Subjects Nuns
St. Albert - Convents

Title

Date 8 Sept. 1909

Photographer Ernest Brown

Remarks Celebration of Father Lacombe's
Jubilee. Individuals are identified on
the negative envelope.

2226-3

Foresight is needed when sorting and arranging a collection. To use an earlier example, if six similar shots of harvesting are arranged so that they are together and numbered in sequence, only one index card is needed to describe all six. Such an index card would look like this.

No.	82.17/3-8
Subjects	Harvesting Carstairs District
Title	
Date	n.d.
Photographer	unknown
Remarks	

2226-3

Another point to remember is that subject entries must be consistent. The usefulness of an index is diminished if a researcher has to look under “Trains”, “Railways”, and “Locomotives” in order to see all photographs relating to rail transportation, or under “Homes”, “Dwellings”, “Residences” for all pictures of houses. For consistency, the indexer(s) should decide on one entry and stick with it. For this reason, it is essential that a master indexing vocabulary be developed. This vocabulary will be the record of indexing decisions made and will ensure consistency in future indexing. (A sample page from the indexing entries used for “Communities” is shown on page 33.) As an aid to researchers, put entries in the master vocabulary and in the index directing researchers to the appropriate term. For example, if you decide to call homes “Houses”, you should prepare cards saying “Homes—See Houses” and “Dwellings—See Houses”.



Far right: Sample page from indexing vocabulary used for photographs of various aspects of Communities.

Homesteaders near Lloydminster, Alberta, n.d. Brown Collection, B.661.

Eagles

Earthmoving Machinery

Earthquakes

Earthworks (Use for earthen dikes)

Easter

Eclipses, Lunar

Eclipses, Solar

Edmonton

Here are listed special subdivisions to be used under names of communities

- Advertising
- Airplanes
- Airports
- Aldermen
- Apartment Buildings
- Archives Buildings
- Arenas
- Art Galleries
- Associations
- Auditoriums
- Automobile Manufacturers
- Automobiles
- Bakeries
- Bands
- Banks
- Barber Shops
- Barges
- Boards of Trade
- Boats
- Bookstores
- Bowling Alleys
- Bridges
- (may be subdivided by names of particular bridges, e.g. Edmonton - Bridges - High Level)

- Breweries
- Brick Trade
- Buildings
- Bus Depots
- Buses
- Businesses
- Businessmen
- Camps
- Cement Industry
- Cemeteries
- Centennial Celebrations
- Ceremonies
- Chambers of Commerce
- Charters
- Children
- Choirs
- Churches
- City Council
- City Hall
- Civic Employees
- Clergy
- Coal Mines and Mining
- Commerce
- Commissioners
- Communications
- Construction
- Convents
- Court-houses
- Crime and Criminals
- Dairies
- Department Stores
- Drugstores
- Elevators
- Entertaining



Interior of Bowden General Store, n.d.
Hoare Collection, H.794.

Right: Oblate mission at Cluny, Alberta,
c. 1910-1911. OMI Collection.

Undoubtedly there will be excellent photographs for which there is incomplete information. The date may be missing, or the names of the people in the picture, or even the occasion. The first step, of course, is to go back to the original owner and see if he or she or family members can assist in further identifying the picture. If this is not possible, or does not prove fruitful, do a little detective work. Compare the photograph with similar identified images. Make a close examination with a magnifying glass to pick out identifying landmarks in the distance, or research local newspapers to find out the date of a particular event. The style of clothing worn by people in a photograph may assist in narrowing down the date of an image. Such work is certainly time-consuming, but worthwhile if it leads to the successful identification of images.



Depending on the available resources, index cards can be typed as they are prepared, or they can be written in pencil for typing later in batches. Then there are two ways of proceeding. The original card can be copied as many times as there are subjects so that there will be a card filed alphabetically under each subject. The second way is to type a separate card for each subject and then file each card alphabetically. As the photograph collection grows, so will the alphabetical index cards. However, if the indexing and filing are kept up to date, there will always be access to the complete collection. Of course, there should also be a set of index cards in numerical order, so that anyone browsing through the prints only can quickly check the appropriate numerical card to find out more information about the image. It may also be advisable to file a set of cards alphabetically by photographers' names.

Sample set of photo index cards for Accession 82.23. A copy of these would be included on the Accession File.

No. 82.23/1-2

Subjects Alberta - Inauguration
Edmonton - Ceremonies

Title Inauguration Ceremonies
marking Alberta's entry into Confedera-
Date 1 Sept. 1905 tion

Photographer Unknown

Remarks

No. 82.23/8

Subjects Edmonton - Streets - Jasper Ave.

Title

Date 1910

Photographer Unknown

Remarks

No. 82.23/3

Subjects Alberta - Inauguration
Edmonton - Ceremonies
Laurier, Sir Wilfrid

Title

Date 1 Sept. 1905

Photographer Unknown

Remarks

No. 82.23/9

Subjects Calgary Stampede
Rodeos
Calf-roping

Title

Date July 1919

Photographer Unknown

Remarks

No. 82.23/4-7

Subjects Edmonton - Streets - Jasper Ave.

Title

Date 1904

Photographer Unknown

Remarks

No. 82.23/10

Subjects Calgary Stampede
Parades
Indians

Title

Date July 1919

Photographer Unknown

Remarks

No. 82.23/10

Subjects Calgary Stampede
Parades
Indians

Title

Date July 1919

Photographer Unknown

Remarks

No. 82.23/10

Subjects Calgary Stampede

Title

Date July 1919

Photographer Unknown

Remarks

No. 82.23/10

Subjects Calgary Stampede
Parades
Indians

Title

Date July 1919

Photographer Unknown

Remarks

No. 82.23/10

Subjects Indians

Title

Date July 1919

Photographer Unknown

Remarks

No. 82.23/10

Subjects Calgary Stampede
Parades
Indians

Title

Date July 1919

Photographer Unknown

Remarks

No. 82.23/10

Subjects Parades

Title

Date July 1919

Photographer Unknown

Remarks

These samples show various ways of typing and filing index cards. The card on the left was typed once and then duplicated as many times as there were subjects. The subjects are then underlined, and the cards are filed alphabetically under the subject underlined. The cards on the right show a system whereby a new one is typed for each subject, and the cards are then filed alphabetically.





White Pass Hotel in Whitehorse, Yukon Territory, n.d. Brown Collection, B.2070.

Left: Prime Minister Sir Wilfrid Laurier addresses the crowd at the Inaugural Ceremonies in Edmonton, 1 September 1905. Brown Collection, B.6661.

Technical Processing

The next important step in caring for an historical photograph collection is the technical processing and storage of prints and negatives. This necessitates access to a photo lab to make copy negatives, duplicate negatives, and prints.

If an institution has a limited budget and does not have its own laboratory, it must use a local commercial photographer to make the copy negatives and reference prints. In this instance, it is important that the copy negatives be made to archival standards, that is, properly processed to remove all traces of residual chemicals.

Photograph collections must be examined carefully before technical processing proceeds. Be on the look-out for damaged prints or negatives. In some cases, the remedy may be simple, but no repairs or restoration should be attempted without the benefit of professional advice. Even cleaning can pose problems. Dusty or dirty prints and negatives should be treated with the greatest care, and cleaning should be limited to gentle dusting with a camel-hair brush or blowing with a puffer brush. Any cleaning involving moisture of any kind, whether water or a solvent, should not be undertaken without the advice of a knowledgeable professional. (Consult the bibliography for further information.)

Right: Louis Riel, c. 1880. Brown Collection, B.1670.

A glass negative must be carefully held so that it is supported on both sides.





Original Negatives and Prints

The ideal archival situation is the acquisition of the original negatives. However, these must be examined carefully. In the following instances, be sure to have them duplicated onto modern safety film.

- Glass plates, by their very nature, are fragile and, in the normal course of events, are likely to be broken. Therefore it makes sense to duplicate them as soon as possible and retire the originals to secure separate storage.
- A more serious threat is posed by nitrate film, which is a grave fire hazard. Nitrate film must be identified and the image copied as quickly as possible. For more information on the identification of nitrate film, consult the sources listed in the bibliography.



An archives technician prepares a copy negative from a glass plate using a copy camera and direct duplicating film.

It is more usual, however, for collections to consist of original prints. In order to preserve them as long as possible, these originals should never be displayed or handled by researchers. A copy negative should be made as soon as possible. From the copy negative make a reference print and then place the original print and the copy negative in secure storage.

Whether making copy negatives or duplicate negatives, it is a good idea to standardize the size at 4" x 5". This is preferable to 35mm because a better image quality is obtained, and a larger negative format is much easier to store and handle. Once the negatives have been made, the number of each should be marked very finely on the edge of every negative on the emulsion (dull) side, using India ink, in case the negative is separated from its storage envelope.

Having obtained stable, archival-quality negatives of each image, make a set of prints. These are the prints to be used for reference purposes and made available to researchers. The advantage of having a set of reference prints is that they can be handled by staff and members of the public with no risk of damage to the originals.

Organizing a reference system depends on such factors as the space, budget, and staff available. One system involves two parts: an alphabetical card index, and reference prints. Each print should have the number of the image recorded on the front edge of the print (the upper right-hand corner is best), and these prints should be filed in numerical order in file folders. Thus, when researchers come across an index card describing an image they want to see, the number of the index card will refer them to the number of the image. They can then go to the reference print by means of the particular number. An alternative would be to include the image on a larger index card so that researchers can look at the images in one step instead of two. This is, of course, somewhat more expensive since, if there are five subjects, it means having five prints.



Above: Each negative should be carefully numbered on the edge.

A researcher consults the index cards and reference prints to locate suitable photographs.





Above: Business street in Saskatoon, 1919. Pollard Collection, P.4211.

Far right: Midway at the Edmonton Exhibition Grounds, 19 July 1951. Garneau Studio Collection, Gs.902/10.

Right: Snowshed construction in Rogers Pass in the mountains, n.d. Brown Collection, B.6014.





Storage

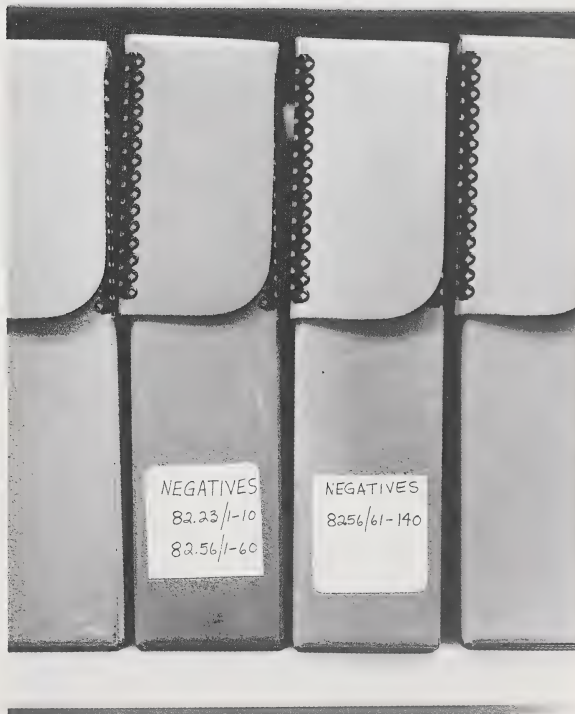
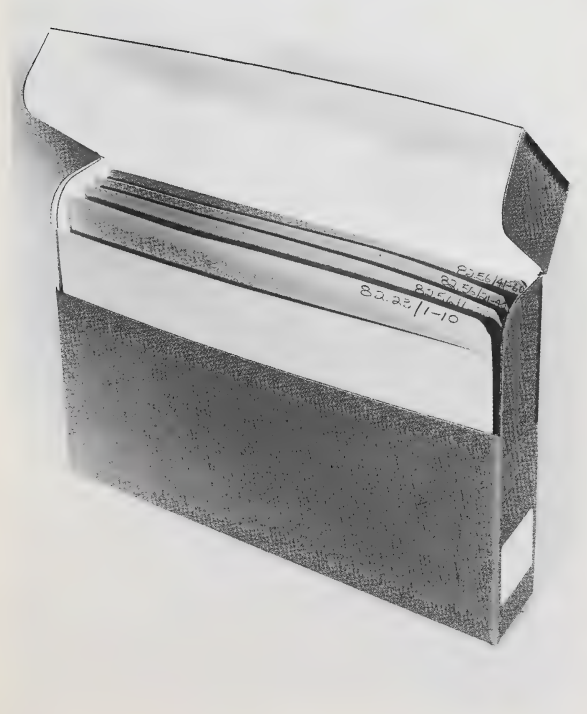
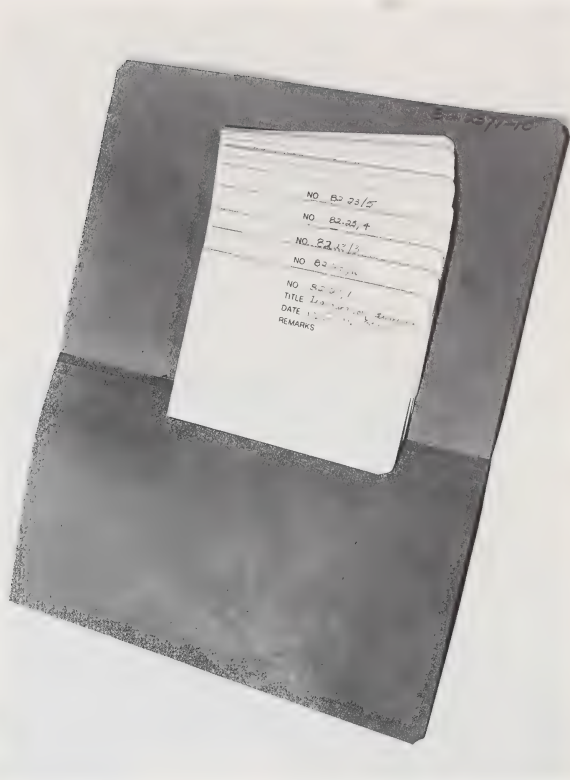
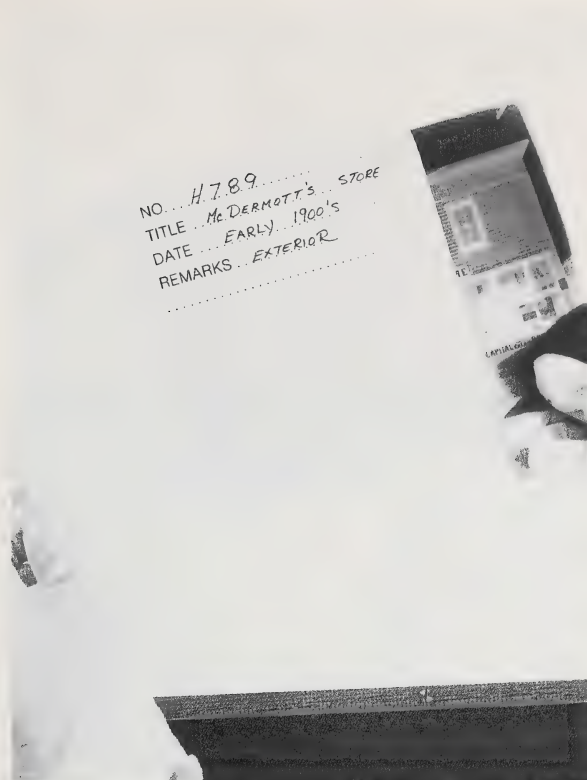
The storage of photographic material requires certain ideal conditions. Both negatives and original prints should be stored in a secure area that has a constant temperature not exceeding 20°C and a relative humidity of 40-45%. If it is not possible to install controls to maintain constant temperature and humidity, house the collection in an area where the temperature and humidity fluctuate as little as possible. Extremes of heat and cold must be avoided, otherwise visible signs of deterioration will occur within several years.

Special storage containers are recommended. (For suppliers of suggested storage material, consult the bibliography.) Each negative should be stored in an acid-free paper envelope, or in a transparent polyester sleeve that is specially manufactured for the safekeeping of photographic materials. The outside of each storage envelope must be identified with the number of the image and, if possible, the main subject(s), the photographers, and the date. (Be sure to mark the identifying information on the envelope *before* you put the negative inside.) The envelopes or sleeves should then be stored in numerical order in a secure area. Possible storage containers could include filing-cabinet drawers, acid-free archival storage boxes, or metal pigeon-hole shelving.

Original prints require similar storage treatment. Whenever possible, they should be removed from their frames, because the glue and backing used almost invariably cause serious damage, if indeed such damage is not already visible. Like negatives, prints should be stored in acid-free paper envelopes or in transparent polyester sleeves. (Standard-size prints and negatives can be stored together in one file folder as long as both are in separate envelopes or sleeves.) For those prints that are larger than the largest available sleeve or envelope, containers can be custom-made by folding and cutting acid-free paper or file folders to the appropriate size.

Albums pose a special storage problem. Usually, an entire album is given one accession number. However, it is quite likely that a number of images will be copied from the album and be assigned unique numbers so that reference prints will be available, and also so that they can be indexed. The original album prints selected for copying should be marked with the reference number. The album can then be stored in an environmentally controlled storage area in an acid-free storage box labelled with the accession number. If anyone wants to study the album as a whole, it is retrievable. However, the availability of reference prints and index cards for the most significant images in the album means that wear and tear on the album is minimized.

Far right: These photos illustrate the proper sequence of storage of negatives in acid-free storage boxes. Negatives can also be stored in acid-free envelopes on metal shelving fitted with vertical dividers.





Color

So far, nothing has been said about color photographs. Modern color photos, attractive as they are, pose extremely difficult problems of preservation. The dyes used in modern processes are subject to fading because they are far more susceptible to light, temperature, and humidity changes than black-and-white images. In short, no color process meets archival standards of preservation. To complicate the matter, the only way of adequately preserving color material is to make three-color separations of each image, a process that is up to ten times more expensive than the production of a black-and-white copy negative. Even large institutions are making separations of only the most precious images and doing their best to minimize damaging factors by proper storage.

Color transparencies (slides) and color negatives should be stored in transparent triacetate or polyester sleeves rather than acid-free paper envelopes, which contain buffering chemicals that may harm film dyes. Experiments indicate that the best solution to the problem of long-term preservation of color materials is cold storage. This is fine if no use is being made of the images. However, few institutions can justify the luxury of preservation only. A solution to this problem is to make a duplicate of each color image for use as a working copy for research or display. The original can then be restored to cold storage, ideally at 25-30% relative humidity and -16°C to -11°C. These images can be placed in special storage envelopes, which can be heat-sealed and stored in a household freezer.

Left: The Mitchell Family standing outside their log cabin, 1889. Brown Collection, B. 7315.

Right: Some members of Louis Riel's Provisional Government, 1885. Brown Collection, B. 1790.



Reference

Once the photograph collection is properly indexed and stored, various items from it can be used to illustrate displays or publications. In addition, researchers will probably want copies of certain items in the collection. Thus, a copying policy will have to be worked out by the directors or executive board. Such issues as price, turn-around time, acknowledgement requirements, and copyright restrictions must be considered.

Some of these issues will depend on the availability of laboratory facilities. If in-house facilities are not available, arrangements will have to be made with some commercial concern whose prices will, of course, determine the institutional charges to researchers. When negatives must be released to an outside agency, emphasize their value and the need for careful handling and processing.

An order form that researchers can use will have to be designed, as well as a form letter granting permission to use the image(s) and specifying

Boating on Cooking Lake, Alberta, n.d.
Brown Collection, B.6545.



NAME OF INSTITUTION

PHOTO REQUISITION

DATE: _____ ORDER NO. _____

NAME: _____ PHONE NO. _____

ADDRESS: _____ Phone When Ready _____

_____ Mail When Ready _____

_____ Will Pay on Pick Up _____

_____ Cost: _____

Total No. of Prints: _____ Size Requested:

Finish: Matte _____ 7 x 13 cm. (3"x5") _____

Glossy _____ 13 x 18 cm. (5"x7") _____

18 x 24 cm. (8"x10") _____

Permission for Publication:

Yes: _____ For _____

No: _____

Remarks/Special Instructions: _____

Negative Nos.: _____

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

acknowledgement requirements. Examples of such forms are shown on pages 51-52. As mentioned earlier, photographs older than 50 years are in the public domain and are not subject to copyright restrictions. However, it is still customary courtesy for a user to print a credit line acknowledging where the print was obtained. Thus, anyone wanting a further copy will know where the original print or negative is preserved.

Dear

I am pleased to grant you permission to use the photograph(s) listed below for the purpose indicated provided you make acknowledgement to the particular collection as indicated on the back of the photograph(s) and give a credit line to the (Name of Institution).

There is no charge for this right.

Photograph(s):

Purpose: Article _____
Book _____
Display _____
Film _____
Other _____

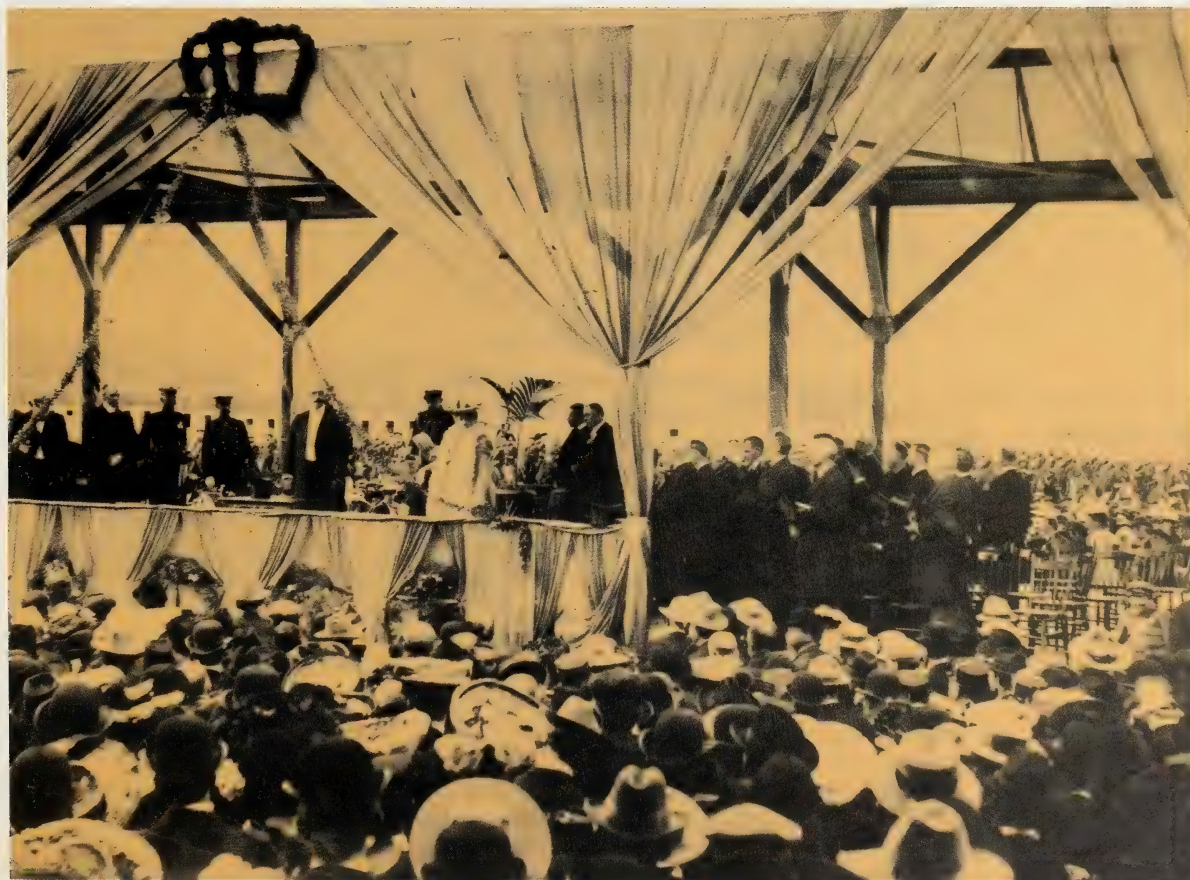
Yours sincerely,

Authorized Signature
Photo Archivist

Conclusion

History cannot be written without textual documentation, as, for example, the formal legislation and speeches that brought various provinces into being. However, the visual image of an Inauguration Day adds a whole new dimension to the record of such an event, and this record is just as significant a part of our documentary heritage as the written word. All of us have a responsibility to ensure that the record is properly preserved by providing adequate resources and facilities to care for historical photographs. These images in time are a priceless part of our heritage. Their loss through neglect or ignorance would be tragic.

Governor General Earl Grey speaking at the Inauguration Ceremonies marking Alberta's achievement of provincial status, 1 September 1905. Brown Collection, B.6660.



Bibliography

The following books and articles provide added information on various topics covered in this book.

General Works

1. Weinstein, Robert A. and Larry Booth. *Collection, Use, and Care of Historical Photographs*. Nashville, Tenn.: American Association for State and Local History, 1977.

This publication is aimed at the non-technical person who has been entrusted with the care of historical photographs. While it does discuss the basic aspects of descriptive processing, it goes into far more detail about the value and uses of historical photographs and the technical aspects of identification, care, and restoration of various types of black-and-white images (daguerreotypes, tintypes, etc.). For those needing information in these areas, this book is the most comprehensive one available.

2. *Archivaria* 5 (Winter 1977-78). (Journal of the Association of Canadian Archivists)

The entire issue is devoted to photographs and archives. Of particular interest are Klaus Hendriks' article, "The Preservation of Photographic Records", and the annotated bibliography.

History of Photography

1. Gernsheim, Helmut and Alison. *The History of Photography from the Camera Obscura to the Beginning of the Modern Era*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969.

A comprehensive reference work that will assist the archivist in identifying various photographic materials and processes.

2. Greenhill, Ralph and Andrew Birrell. *Canadian Photography: 1839-1920*. Toronto: The Coach House Press, 1979.

This is a revised and expanded version of Greenhill's book *Early Photography in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1965).

Arrangement and Indexing

1. Bowditch, George. "Cataloging Photographs: a procedure for small museums." Technical Leaflet 57, American Association for State and Local History. *History News* 26 (November 1971).

This pamphlet outlines a suggested procedure for numbering and indexing a small photo collection.

2. Vanderbilt, Paul. "Filing your Photographs". Technical Leaflet 36, American Association for State and Local History. *History News* 21 (June 1966).

This pamphlet offers suggestions for organizing and storing a small collection. However, it is not up to date on such matters as acid-free storage materials.

Technical Processing

1. Conrad, James H. "Copying Historical Photographs: Equipment and Methods." Technical Leaflet 139, American Association for State and Local History. *History News* 36 (August 1981).

This pamphlet outlines the basic equipment required to set up an in-house, historical photograph copying program.

2. *Preservation of Photographs*. Rochester, New York: Eastman Kodak Company, Publication F-30, 1979.

This item deals particularly with processing for stability, and touches on storage and cleaning as well.

3. Rempel, Siegfried. *The Care of Black and White Photographic Collections: Identification of Processes*. Technical Bulletin 6, Canadian Conservation Institute. Ottawa, November 1979.
4. Rempel, Siegfried. *The Care of Black and White Photographic Collections: Cleaning and Stabilization*. Technical Bulletin 9, Canadian Conservation Institute. Ottawa, December 1980.

Storage Materials

1. American National Standards Institute publications:
American Standard Requirements for Photographic Filing Enclosures for Storing Processed Photographic Films, Plates and Papers. ANSI PH1.53-1978.
Practice for Storage of Black and White Photographic Paper Prints. ANSI PH1.48-1974.
Practice for Storage of Processed Photographic Plates. ANSI PH1.45-1976.
Practice for Storage of Processed Safety Photographic Film. ANSI PH1.43-1979.

These publications are available from:

American National Standards Institute, Inc.
1430 Broadway
New York, N.Y. 10018
U.S.A.

The recommendations of the American National Standards Institute have been adopted by the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) and provide excellent guidelines for keepers of photographic collections. They are based on extensive research undertaken by the photographic manufacturing industry and the United States National

Bureau of Standards on the properties of photographic materials.

2. Wilson, E.J. *Housekeeping Our Heritage: Practical advice for Alberta collections*. Edmonton: Provincial Museum of Alberta, 1980.

Written to provide the staff of museums and art galleries in Alberta with practical advice on the storage and maintenance of their collections, this book includes information which archivists will find useful, including the names and addresses of suppliers of storage materials.

3. Wilson, Nancy, ed. *Museum and Archival Suppliers Handbook*. Toronto: The Ontario Museum Association and the Toronto Area Archivists Group, 1978.

This item provides lists of suggested supplies and suppliers of materials used in archives and museums work.

Copyright

1. Copyright Act (Revised Statutes of Canada 1970, Chapter C-30).
2. Rodger, Andrew. "Annotated Bibliography on Copyright." *Archivaria* 5 (Winter 1977-78): 133-134.

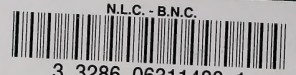
Tax Credit

1. Cameron, Duncan F. *An Introduction to the Cultural Property Export and Import Act*. Ottawa: Department of the Secretary of State, 1977.
2. National Archival Appraisal Board.

Further information about the National Archival Appraisal Board may be obtained from:

Ian Wilson, Chairperson
National Archival Appraisal Board
c/o Saskatchewan Archives Board
University of Regina
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4S 0A2

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